

not Shannon, but Lethe. Again, the unmystical eyes of the Frenchman, still more of the Englishman, do not look for Love's flying footsteps in the remoteness of mountain or star. Literature would be poorer without any one of these three poems; yet one may value Ronsard's most of all, not only for its poetry, but also for the truer balance of its attitude to life. There at least most Greek poets, I think, would have agreed.

But perhaps the only real parallel with Ronsard's poetry is not poetry at all. It is the music of Mozart. There alone have I felt the same delicacy of touch alike in gaiety and sorrow. To strictly religious persons, such as Communists, love-poetry is no doubt an idle thing and a life like Ronsard's a wasted one. It was not a very happy one, even though he had a great fund of gaiety—as Pontus de Tyard wrote, 'blessee cent fois, ta passion est

fiie'. At heart, Ronsard felt too strongly to be a care-ee Don Juan. But the fertility and flexibility of his genius to die end does bring to mind that curious theory of Proust's, that a writer needs a series of love-affairs, like some magic steed fed on roses in a fairy-tale—they will prevent him from wasting his time on the hollow stupidity of social relations; and, though they will not bring him happiness, the very unhappiness they bring will keep his intelligence alertly speculating on the reasons why human happiness is impossible. Contrasting Goethe, say,

with Wordsworth, we may admit that this
view contains some truth; though, remembering
Socrates or Montaigne or Hardy, we must add that it is far
from containing the whole truth. A writer may surely
keep his youth by voyaging through strange seas, without
having a new love in every port. He may have other
passionate interests. Ronsard himself had. He has sung
Nature as well as any of his human mistresses.